Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
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EDITORIAL

WARMEST CHRISTMAS GREETINGS, and A HAPPY NEW YEAR, to all our readers.

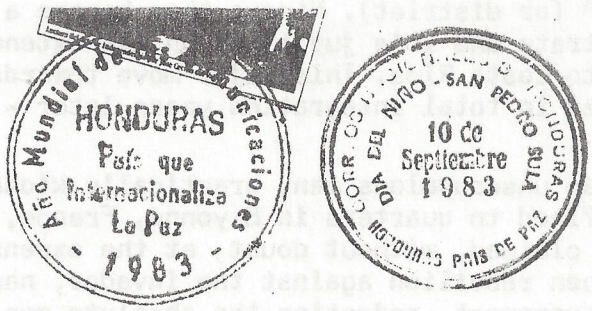
REMEMBER our next CENTRAL AMERICAN meeting is at the VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, near Marble Arch, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on SATURDAY 24th MARCH 1984. Please book this date into your diaries, do your best to be there, and bring some items from your collection to show to us. It always seems to be the same people who exhibit; this time, there is plenty of notice, so let's see some new exhibitors - and some new faces.

WE have a very full issues, this time, so we'll let you get straight into it.

Bernard Davies

NEW CAUSERIE

1401


Año Mundial de las Comunicaciones
HONDURAS
País que Internacionaliza La Paz
- 1983 -
CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS DE HONDURAS
DIA DEL NIÑO - SAN PEDRO SULA
10 de Septiembre 1983
Honduras País de Paz

Leo Malz draws attention to two new commemorative cancels which were spplied on some Honduras commercial covers from his business mail. One os for World Communications Year (from Tegucigalpa) and the other for Children's Day (from San Pedro Sula). He wonders whether anyone can advise whether there are any other such cancels from this year or earlier, whether they are government or municipally authorized, how long they were in use etc..

1402 Chris. Bettis asks whether anyone can supply dates for (a) holding of the office of Factor de Tabaco in Leon and San Vincente by Dr (or Don) Manuel Vela, and (b) of the office of Belgian Vice-Consul in Guatemala City by Monsieur Buimez. Alternatively, does anyone know of reference works that might help?

1405 Mike Birks reports the finding of two new surcharge varieties on the railway coupons of 1912. The stamps in question are SG 0351, Scott 0240, which Gibbons list as existing only with the surcharge reading up. The example illustrated has the surcharge reading down, and SG0353, Scott 0242, which Gibbons list as having the surcharge reading down. The example illustrated has the surcharge reading up. Both stamps have RPS certificates.

This article first appeared in Spanish in the September/October 1982 edition of "Panorama", bulletin of "La Bolsa Filatelica", and has been translated into English by Richard A Washburn.

COSTA RICA - THE "GUANACASTE OVERPRINTS

by RICARDO ALVAREZ P.

Error: GUAGACASTE doubly overprinted

Many countries have a philatelic "era" or period during which the stamps, because of chance, become rarities. The urgent need of the one penny Mauritius; the Anglo-French occupation of Togo in the first world war, or the German take-over of the Saar in the second; the Ponce and Coamo provisionals of Puerto Rico, the Aichach of Bavaria, the Port of Prince issue of Cuba; the "Aero Correo" first issue airs of Honduras; and many more, that are not rarities of a regular issue, but provisionals needed to fullfil a specific need, fortuitous due to unforseen circumstances.

Generally, these issues, as you would suppose, were made on the spur of the moment and in small quantities - at least some of the values - limited in number, thus now rare and expensive.

One of these fortuitous events occured in Costa Rica and the "Guanacsate" overprints became the gems of Costa Rica philately. Their history and distinctive characteristics are the subject of this brief résumé.

At the onset of the XIX century, Costa Rica comprised the province of the same name, with Cartago as the capital, and the "Partido" or district of Nicoya, that had for two centuries maintained total independence from both Costa Rica and Nicaragua as an "Alcaldía Mayor" (or district). Nicoya then became a "Corregimiento" by royal decree, under a magistrate and it's jurisdiction was extended into a small area in Nicaragua, but more so into Costa Rica. This major move towards Costa Rica started the political trend that culminated in total integration years later - let us see how.

When France invaded Spain, in 1808, Napoléon, an unscrupulous man, practically kidnapped the Spanish King Fernando VII, holding him confined to quarters in Bayonne, France, until he had obtained the concessions and priveleges claimed, without doubt, at the expense of the Spanish people. The Spanish patriots, in open rebellion against the invador, named a "Junta" and established the constitutional government, rejecting the absolute monarchy.

The first "Cortés" or Congress, under the new system, met in Cadiz in 1810. The kingdom of Guatemala was represented in this Congress by various deputies, among those the presbyter Florencio del Castillo, in the year 1812.

The "Cortés" of Cádiz made great liberal reforms one being a Constitution, but the defeat of Napoléon in 1814, and the return of Fernando VII to the Spanish throne, resulted in abolishment of all done by the Congress and reinstatement of the absolute monarchy. Nevertheless, after many a bloody battle, the patriots commanded by Rafael del Riego in the year 1820, forced the king to reestablish the 1812 Constitution and invoke the Congress.

This Constitution required that a province, to be eligible for election of a deputy, have at least 60,000 inhabitants. Costa Rica had only 53,000 at this time, so it was decided to incorporate, by popular consensus, but provisionally, the "Partido" or county of Nicoya and the towns of Santa Cruz and Guanacaste; this last one is now the city of Liberia, Costa Rica.

With this conventional union the province of Costa Rica elected José María Zamora, from the city of Cartago, to the Spanish congress in November of 1820.

The inuependence of Central America came in 1821. From this moment on the District of Nicoya and outlying towns, initiated a strong movement to separate themselves from Nicaragua, to become a permanent part of Costa Rica. Finally, in 1824, a plebiscite was held, the result being a majority vote for the union with Costa Rica, and in 1825, when the Central American states formed a federal republic, the Congress of this Federation decreed that the district of Nicoya should be separated from Nicaragua, and join Costa Rica until definite State boundaries be established.

This is how the "Partido de Nicoya" and surrounding towns became the seventh province of Costa Rica, called from then on "Guanacaste", possibly because of the abundance of trees of that name that exist in the region (Species "Enterolobium cyclocarpum")

Costa Rica began to organise a state mail system starting in 1839, and the first postage stamps, the ½ real and 2 reales, were issued in April of 1863. During the colonial period and post-independence, there was almost no private mail and that emanating from the Tobacco Monopoly at Villa Nueva (San José), and other governmental offices in the main population centres, provides us with the scarce, interesting pre-adhesive postal markings, many of which help in the study of our postal history. When the regular post was established, another problem arose, especially in the outlying provinces, the lack of roads and, why not mention it, the lack of correspondence.

The few letters sent and the lack of adequate transport dictated the employment of private merchants to sell both postage stamps and fiscal paper in lieu of having government run post offices, a practice still prevalent in Costa Rica. But if we consider the small markup permitted by the government on the sale of stamps (8%) you will understand why this business was of little interest to the businessmen of the area.

However, the government understood the problem, and on the 14th of August, 1885, issued the following decree. "DECREE N^0 CIX 14 August, 1885: National Palace, San José. Owing to the difficulties presented in trying to establish sales agencies for fiscal stamps in the Province of Guanacaste, S.E. (His Excelency) the General-President of the Republic decrees: concede a 6% discount on assistance vouchers, and 15% on the purchase of stamped paper, revenue and postage stamps, on the condition that these stamps and fiscal paper, once marked with a special counter-mark, be used only in that province. This decree takes effect the 1st of September, 1885.

This decree it seemed, solved the problem; it almost doubled the discount on the sale of stamps for the residents of Guanacaste. At the same time, however, it left open the possibility of fraud seeing that anyone could buy the stamps at the new discount and even with the "Guanacaste" overprint, nothing really stopped them from being used in the rest of the country. To avoid this possible fraud, the government issued, on the 3rd of September, 1885, a new Decree N^0 CXIX stating that the fiscal paper and stamps sold for use in the province of Guanacaste, cannot be used anywhere else to the detriment of the Treasury because of the greater discount given in that province. The decree states: stamped paper, postage and revenue stamps and other fiscal paper overprinted with the word Guanacaste can only be used in that province, and if used elsewhere they will have no value, effect or consequence.

In this way the Government created an obstacle to fiscal fraud, and what is more, without suspecting it fixed a philatelic norm: that the used "Guanacaste" overprints are only authentic if cancelled with a postmark of the cities or towns of that province. Later on, I will indicate the postmarks I have seen, including some of those that were used during the first few years of validity from the "Jefaturas Políticas" (Government offices) that acted as provisional post offices.

We have now explained the raison d'être for the Guanacaste overprints. Let us now run quickly through the distinguishing characteristics of these stamps that circulated, and were valid, for use in the Guanacaste province of Costa Rica from September 1885, until November, 1891, that is six years, and "why" the rarity and high value given to some of these stamps.

The "Guanacaste" overprints were applied only in complete series on the postage stamp issues of 1883, 1888 and 1889, and on the "Timbre Proporcionales" (revenue stamps) of 1884-1888.See basic stamps Figures 1 and 2 on the next page.

- HOJA No. 6 - GUIA SINOPTICA -

- LOS SELLOS "BASE" Y SUS SOBRECARGAS (2ª Parte) -

d) Fiscales de 1889 (con la efigie del Lic. y Gen. Bernardo Soto, conocida como de "don Bernardo joven"):

(café) (azul)

Ambos sellos existen UNICAMENTE con sobrecargas horizontales de TIPO G9 y en tinte negra.

e) Los primeros nueve valores de la emisión postal de 1889 (con la efigie del Licenciado y General Bernardo Soto):

(sepia) (verde-azul) (amarillo) (café-rojo)

(verde) (rojo) (azul) (violeta) (verde-oliva)

Todos estos 9 sellos fueron sobrecargados en negro con leyendas horizontales de TIPO G12. Y los 4 primeros valores aparecen con la última sobrecarga "GUANACASTE", que lo es horizontal, en tinta negra y de TIPO G13.

NOTA:- Conviene recordar que los 20 sellos "base" que se mencionan en esta Guía (Hojas Nos. 5 y 6), fueron los UNICOS usados en sobrecargas "GUANACASTE". Y que los diversos tipos de estas sobrecargas (y también el "CORREOS"), aparecen EXCLUSIVAMENTE en aquellos sellos base a que se ha hecho referencia.

Figure 1

- HOJA No. 6 - GUIA SINOPTICA -

- LOS SELLOS "BASE" Y SUS SOBRECARGAS (1ª Parte) -

a) Fiscales de 1861 (efigie del General Próspero Fernández):

(rojo) (azul)

Ambos sellos fueron sobrecargados en negro con tipos horizontal G2 y verticales G3 al G7. Además, los de 2c (azules) que así fueron sobrecargados, se contramarcaron también POSTERIORMENTE con el "CORREOS" (horizontal en negro) de Plancha "25".

b) Emisión postal de 1863 (efigie del Gen. P. Fernández):

(verde) (rojo) (violeta) (amarillo) (azul)

Estos sellos existen con las siguientes sobrecargas:-
TIPO G1 (horizontal): 1, 2 y 10c en negro; 1, 5 y 40c en rojo.
TIPO G2 (horizontal): Todos en negro, y los de 5 y 40c en rojo.
TIPO G3 (horizontal): 2 y 10c en negro; 1, 5 y 40c en rojo.
TIPOS G3 al G7 (verticales): 1, 2, 5 y 10c en negro.
TIPO G8 (vertical): 1, 2, 5 y 10c en negro.
TIPO G9 (horizontal): sólamente el de 2c con s/c en negro.

c) Sellos postales de 1868 (conocidos como de 1867 - con la efigie del Licenciado y General Bernardo Soto):

(violeta) (amarillo)

Las sobrecargas de ambos sellos son todas en negro. El de 5c aparece con TIPO G10 o bien con TIPO G11; el de 10c sólo existe con TIPO G9. (Todas estas s/c son horizontales).

Figure 2

- REPRODUCCIONES FOTOGRAFICAS (A ESCALA 2:1) -

HOJA No. 1: LOS TRECE TIPOS "GUANACASTE"

(Referencias a Catálogos Sáenz y Scott)

Sobrecargas horizontales (Sáenz G1, G2 y G3)(Scott a, b y c):-

Guanacaste Guanacaste Guanacaste

G1(a) G2(b) G3(c)

Sobrecargas verticales (con el mismo G3 que Scott llama "d"):-

Guanacaste Guanacaste GUANACASTE GUANACASTE GUANACASTE

G3(d) G4(e) G5(f) G6(h) G7(g)

Otra sobrecarga vertical (G8) y demás horizontales:-

G8(i) GUANACASTE Guanacaste G9(m)

G10(l) Guanacaste Guanacaste G11(k)

G12(n) GUANACASTE GUANACASTE G13(o)

NOTA: En la primera edición del Catálogo del Dr. Sáenz, que adopta para GUANACASTE la clasificación del Catálogo Gibbons, aparecen intercambiados por error los tipos G10 y G11.

↑ Figure 3 ↑

Any other stamp that appears overprinted "Guanacaste" is an absolute forgery. There exists 13 types of overprints (Figure 3) distributed over 8 plates, all authentic, and one more plate, not identified, called type G8, status still in dispute all these years. The difference between types and plates is because in those "golden" years the Costa Rican National Printing Office lacked sufficient type of the same kind to prepare a plate of 50 identical subjects! And so we have plate 1, the only one with the vertical overprints and it has five different types as can be seen in Figure 4 and 5.

I should like to clarify here that this G1, G2, G3 etc. classification was established in Costa Rica to facilitate study of the different types in each plate.

PLANCHA I

G3	G4	G4	G4	G7	G5	G5	G6	G6	G6
G3	G4	G4	G4	G7	G5	G5	G6	G6	G6
G3	G4	G4	G4	G7	G5	G5	G6	G6	G6
G3	G3	G4	G4	G7	G5	G5	G6	G6	G6
G3	G3	G4	G4	G7	G5	G5	G6	G6	G6

↑ Figure 5 ↑

↓ Figure 4 ↓

- REPRODUCCIONES FOTOGRAFICAS (A ESCALA 2:1) -

HOJA No. 2: ALGUNAS VARIEDADES "CONSTANTES"

(Los números corresponden a leyendas de las planchas)

De PLANCHA I (la de tipos verticales G3 al G7):

(7) GUANACASTE GUANACASTE GUANACASTE (47)

1ª A con pie quebrado (16) G cruceta quebr. S "culebra"

(44) Guanacaste GUANACASTE (60)

2ª a de tipo G3 E mutilada

De PLANCHA III (la de sólo el tipo G1):

(19) Guanacaste Guanacaste Guanacaste (31)

a con punto pequeño (23) t mordida t de tipo G2

De PLANCHA IV (la de tipos G1 y G3 horizontales):

(5) Gnanacaste Guanacaste (11)

G(n)anacaste! G quebrada y a punto grande

De PLANCHA V (de tipo G9):

(26) Gnanacaste Guanacaste Gnanacaste (49)

c con "zedilla" (28) n caída Sobrecarga en arco

De PLANCHA VII (de tipo G12):

GUAGACASTE GUANACASTE GUAGACASTE

(22) GUA(G)ACASTE! Sello "especial"! (28) GUA(G)ACASTE!

De PLANCHA VIII (de tipo G13):

Sello No. 71 GUANACASTE A sin barra (o V invertida)

Figure 6

In both these plates, in addition to the printing errors: eg double and, offset overprints, letter type displacements, etc. we find some interesting and attractive combinations, such as vertical pairs se-ténant with both letter types including double overprints. And in plate VI, besides the vertical pairs se-tenant there is a peculiar case of two different letter types side by side in the centre of the plate which gives us the unique possibility for a horizontal se-ténant pair (Figure 8). It is easy to understand then why such a piece is so scarce and eagerly sought after, and subsequently missing in most collections (see example in Figure 9).

So the 13 known types, authentic or doubtful (G8) are identified from G1 to G13. The quantities of each type printed are unknown. But the reduced postal usage, already mentioned, and the difficulty one encounters trying to find genuine stamps mint or used indicates that the printings were few, and the reason the stamps have a higher market value than is estimated by the major catalogues. Precisely due to this scarcity, some of the constant varieties (Figure 6) are very rare in certain types, almost impossible to locate, and reach very high prices internationally.

Among the plates, there are two, IV and VI, that are most important because they have two printing types in each one; in the first types G1 and G3 (see Figure 7); and in the second the G11 and G10 types in this order (see Figure 8).

PLANCHA VI

11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
11	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	10	10
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Figure 7

PLANCHA IV

G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1
G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1	G1
G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3
G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3
G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3	G3

↑ Figure 8 ↑

↓ Figure 9 ↓

Figure 10

We follow with plate VII, type G12 (Scott Guanacaste 55 to 63). These stamps are not too difficult to locate, but there were two printings; one in London - Waterlow & Sons - and the other in Costa Rica - Imprenta Nacional. The first has no varieties of any significance, but the second, done in Costa Rica, has a spelling error that appears in four values: the 50 cts and 1, 2 and 5 pesos. The error is a substitution of the letter "N" with a "G" which makes the overprint read "GUAGACASTE". A difficult piece to acquire, and the four errors now are values at a few thousands of dollars. Also the local printing has a second error on stamp number 22; the overprint "GUAGACASTE" is double! Until now only one stamp has been reported (see Figure 10).

Plate VIII, type G13 (Scott Guanacaste 64-67), has four minor varieties and a fifth very important: the second "A" exists without a bar in the 1, 5 and 10 cent values. It has never been seen in the 2 cent value strange as it may seem.

And finally Plate IX (Scott Guanacaste 39, 40, 41) type G8 vertical, is a mystery, because nothing concrete is known about this type. Mint copies of this type are unknown as are multiples. The four values (four exist even though Scott mentions only three) are really very rare, appear always used, with unidentified postmarks. In Costa Rica, stamps from this plate are classified as "not identified" and permanently quarentined. Nevertheless, they command high prices, and the 1 and 10 cent values are very scarce and expensive.

It is impossible to give all the details relative to the "Guanacaste" overprints in only one article, necessarily condensed. I should like nevertheless to detail, using the Scott numbers the scarcest of the 67 regular values/types listed in the catalogue.

No's	13 - very rare	20 - rare	33 - very rare
	19 - rarest of all, only six known	27 - very rare	35 - rare
		31 - very rare	37 - rare
		32 - rare	

There are also fiscal stamps known as "Timbres Proporcionales" overprinted "Guanacaste" that were used to frank correspondence during times of postage stamp shortages. These are rare especially the type G3. Many counterfeit overprints exist, as does with the entire Guanacaste issue, and one should acquire only those that have been expertised by a recignised expert in this specific field.

Complementing the foregoing please look carefully at Figure 10, that shows six of the major printing errors of this issue. Some of these pieces are unique, of irreplaceable value.

Lastly, a comment about the most difficult of all "Guanacaste" genuinely used covers! It was very fortunate, after forty long years of continued search, to find one in 1981, only two years ago. Much to my surprise, I received word that a genuine cover was coming up for auction sale. I even left the hospital, where I was interned waiting for minor heart surgery, and travelled with my wife, in mid-winter, all the way to the Canadian border to participate in the sale and obtain it. You can imagine the joy when I held it finally in my hands, oblivious of the high price paid and the pains that reminded me I should be in the hospital operating room.

The cover is almost perfect (below) with a pair of Guanacaste Scott N° 66, mailed at Liberia, Costa Rica, February 15, 1890, arrived at Milwaukee, Wisconsin on March 7th, same year. Circular postmarks oforigin, New York transit, and arrival backstamps all well executed and in order.

No one knows exactly how many Guanacaste covers exist; the last I heard there were eight including the one illustrated. If we could really compare this type of thing given the philatelic importance of one area over another, it is a fact that there are more Mauritius "Post Office" covers known than those overprinted for use in our small province in Costa Rica.

Why should not one be so happy to locate one!

I will close here with this brief explanation about the overprints issued for the Guanacaste province (1885-1891) in which I described briefly those plates that are of most importance to the collectors. It is sincerely hoped that this modest work, and above all the illustrations, will help my colleagues better understand these overprints and why here in Costa Rica we consider them the "gems" of our philately.

Thanks to the Costa Rican Philatelic Association for allowing me to reproduce the major part of the illustrations that enrich the text.

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NEW CAUSERIE

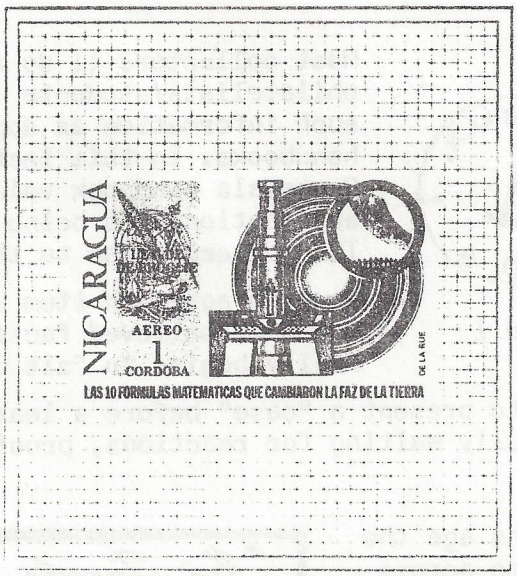
1403 Leo Harris raises two questions about HONDURAS.

1. Is anything known about SG 206, but imperforate between rather than completely imperforate? He has a mint and a used (barred cancel) of this SG 206 imperforate between.

2. The same query about imperforate between applies to SG 193 (although Leo says he has this only in the guise of the overprinted version SG 0388).

1404 Leo Maltz encloses a photocopy of one value from the 1971 Nicaragua Scientific Formulae issue (Scott 877-81, C761-5) - imperforate, without a margin and affixed to the card as illustrated (cut down). The whole set exists, numbered 269/3. Leo has varying reports that these proofs exist in a quantity of two or three or of 50-100. He asks "Which is correct? What would be an approximate market value for such an item? Would proofs of this nature be easy to counterfeit? Does de la Rue often allow their proofs to appear on the market, and if so, what other issues are known?".

THOMAS DE LA RUE & COMPANY LIMITED, LONDON



PROOF NO. 269/3 DATE 11 2 71

OLD CAUSERIE

0114 Mrs Jean Milner has had another look at our first issue, of Sept. 1980, and notes that the Nicaragua ABN Co to Waterlow back to ABN Co is not the only example in Latin America of rapid reprinting by alternative printers. She believes American postal officials must have had need to transfer dies and plates, despite security hazards. She lists the following examples of re-draws:

Bolivia. 1894 Bradbury Wilkinson Arms. Stamps recalled; plates transferred to Paris.
Colombia. 1920's Arms Revenues. Many printers; stamps identical.
Venezuela. 1920's ABN Co's portrait, slightly re-drawn by Waterlow.
Uruguay. 1930's Waterlow, Barriero & Ramos; Imp. National Exchanges.
Guatemala. 1871 Arms. 1924-9 Perkins Bacon, Waterlow and de la Rue issues with minor alterations only.

Are there any others to add to the list? Any comments, please.

1003 Leo Harris (of London) comments upon Richard Washburn's enquiry about Honduras SG 157, that is he has two copies of SG 157, one perf 12, one perf 14; he has two copies of the inverted variety SG 157a, both of which are perf 14; he also has an unlisted variety, which he considers to be quite respectable, with the second "i" of "Independencia" completely missing, perf 14. He considers it strange that of five copies of this particular overprint in his possession, four are perf 14 when Richard says that only perf 12 is mentioned in the catalogues. (Neither the Michel nor the Yvert catalogues make any reference to perf). Leo notes that the issue of SG 140-147 is given the dateline Jan.1911 in both SG and Scott, but merely 1911 in Michel and Yvert. He wonders whether both pers were issued at the same time. Since the catalogue values of the 2c and 5c perf 12 are a little higher than those perf 14 this would seem to indicate a shorter life or fewer copies, while the 1 peso is listed only perf 12. One can understand his having four out of five copies perf 14 if more supplies of perf 14 were available for overprinting than of perf 12. However, as Leo remarks, that is something to which the answer will probably never be known. Leo adds in response to the other part of Richard's enquiry that he (Leo) has a used copy of SG 142a, again the perf 12, but no mint copy.

1101 Richard Washburn asks if anyone knows what the post card rate was in 1904; he says he knows that in 1909 it was 5 centavos, so that the 6 centavos on the Croatia card may be this 5 centavos + 1 centavo overpayment.
(The Editor has cards of 1907 and 1908 bearing 6 centavos, and of 1909 and 1910 bearing 5 centavos, which would suggest a change at or towards the end of 1908 - B.D.)

GUATEMALA

LARGE TYPE NUMERAL "1" AND "2" IN CIRCLES - "USED IN GUATEMALA CITY ONLY"

by QUETZAL

Foreword

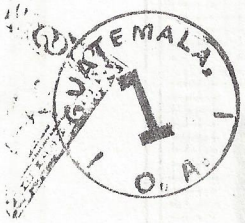


figure 1

Most collectors (I do make the distinction between collectors and philatelists/students = those who study ...) tend to take for granted such information as appears in catalogues and in (competently written) handbooks. In this instance the writer refers of course to the Guatemala handbook volume 1, where on pages 245/246 the 2 handstamps are mentioned as being used in Guatemala City only - hence the title. The numbers given to these marks are CN1 and CN2 (figure 1).

Now and again an item appears which may cast some doubt on previously known or believed facts but when several are encountered then one really begins to "sit up" and study the matter more closely.

In order to present a "case" before a learned readership (such as members of our Society), and hopefully waiting for reactions, proof is required.

Doubts

Some months ago the writer came across a ppc. sent from RETALHULEU on March 17, 1903 to Switzerland (Figure 2).

The stamps are cancelled with CN1 in addition to the octagonal "Recibida en Guatemala" strike of 20, 1903, MAR (!). Nothing unusual at first glance but when a similar item turned up a little later - treated in exactly the same way - I began to have some doubts as to the location of usage of CN1 and CN2.

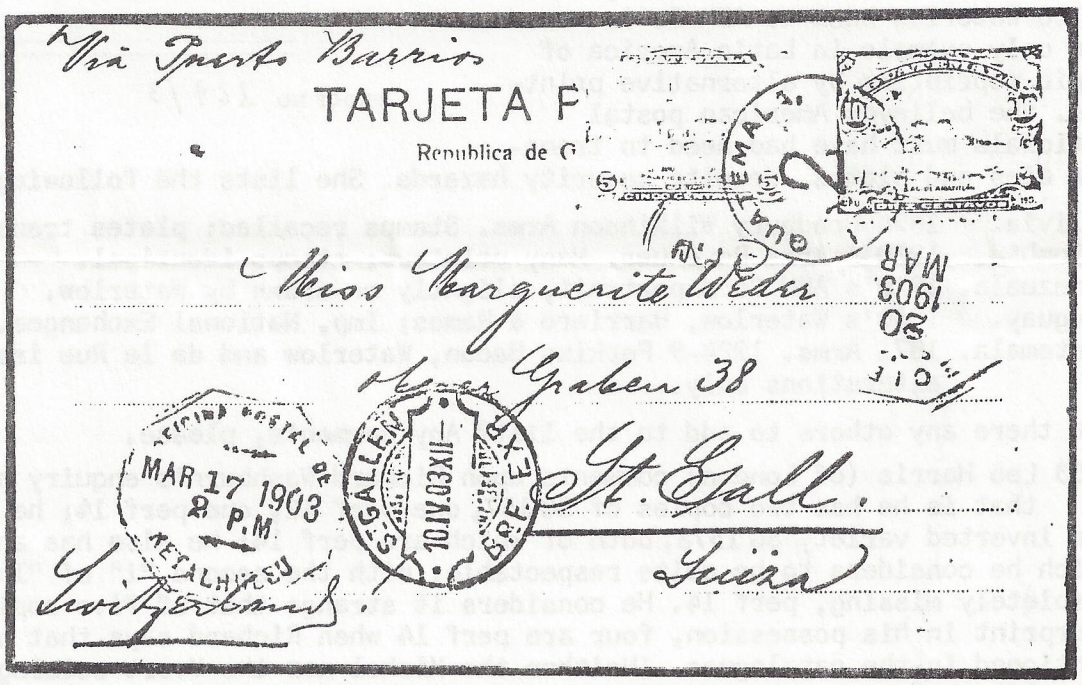


Figure 2

Is it possible that in Retalhuleu similar cancellers were in use? Still, the doubts persisted.

Proof

Just recently, however, I was fortunate to acquire a large batch of covers and cards all addressed to Señor Don Herman Span, nearly all of them locally used in or addressed to Guatemala City. 14 of these have one thing in common:

a) from Retalhuleu to G.C.
b) all with large type numerals "1" or "2" - strikes in purple
c) all with "Recibida en Guatemala" arrival mark (except one, see Figure 5).

6 envelopes have the stamp(s) on the front and 9 at the back. The earliest is dated Nov. 14, 1900 and the latest March 6, 1904 (none in 1902).

Illustrated on the next page are four covers (Figures 3 to 6, cut down to save space) taken at random which clearly indicates the use in Retalhuleu of CN1 (3 covers) and CN2 (12 covers).

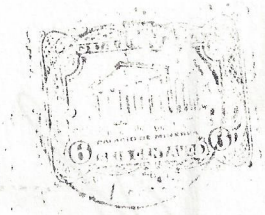


Figure 4

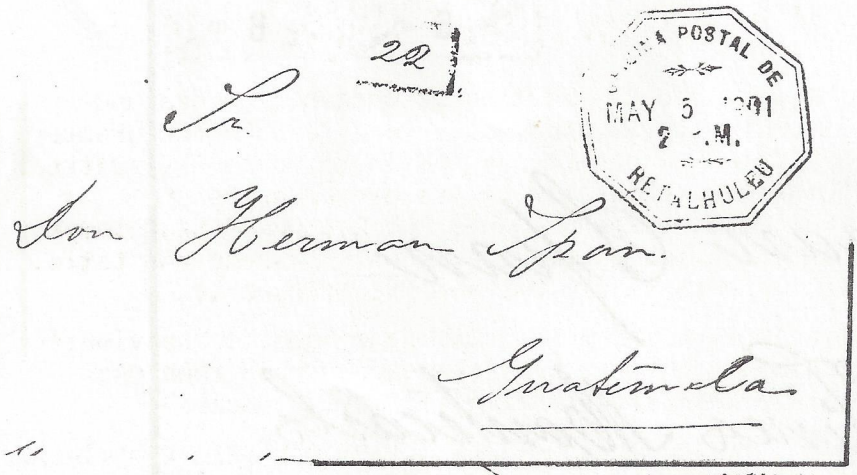


Figure 3

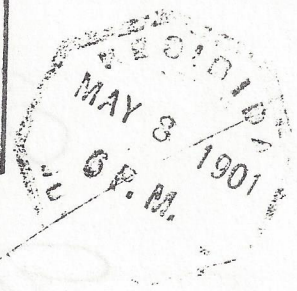


Figure 5 (below)

Figure 6 (bottom)

If this still leaves any doubts then here is the

Final Proof

A cover of Nov.14, 1900 from Retalheleu to Chicacao (approx. 40 km east of Retal-huleu) with CN1 (not clearly visible in the photocopy), backstamped the following day at Chicacao. (Figure 7, illustrated on the next page).

I may add that measurements taken show no differences for calcellers applied both in G.C. and Retalhuleu, the diameter being 2·5 cm, and the height of the numerals 1 cm.

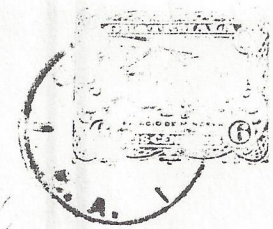
If you, dear readers, can confirm these findings or have an alternative explanation, please let's hear from you.

P.S.

Figure 8 (next page) illustrates a cover from Retalhuleu to G.C. dated April 23, 1901 with a rectangular box in purple and m/s "2" inserted. Another cover from the same place to G.C. dated May 5, 1901 has "22" inserted in the box.

I reckon this was used for a short period as a system of numbering items of mail accepted.

Any other ideas?



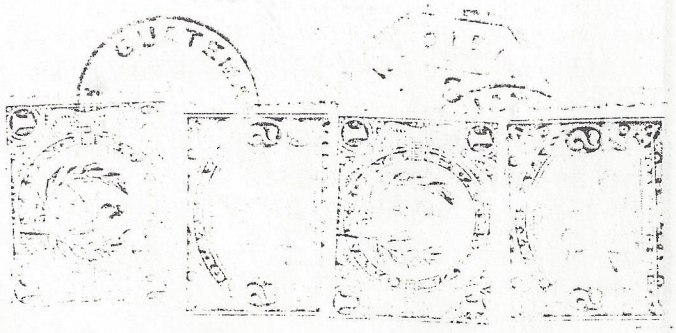


Figure 7

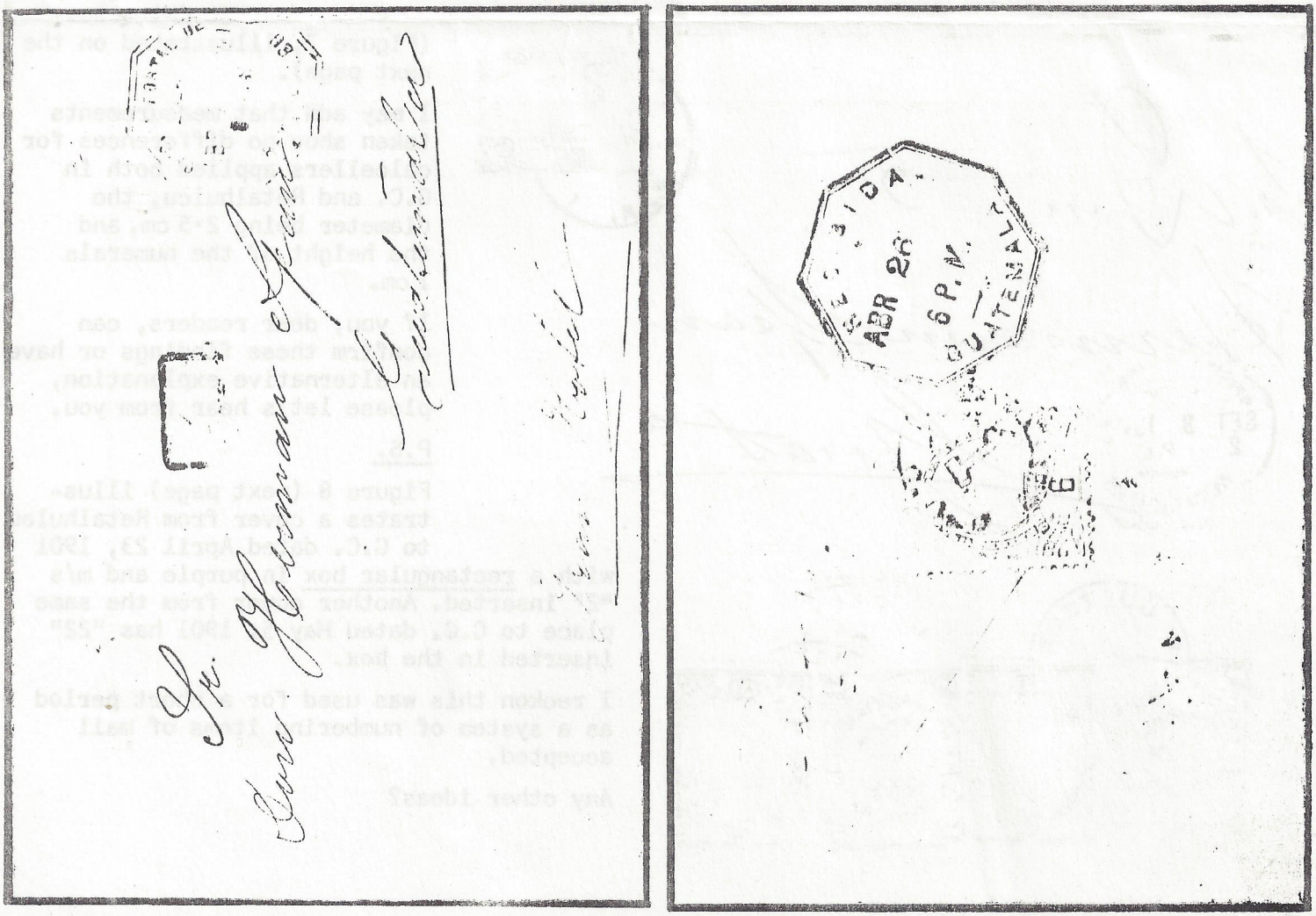


Figure 8